

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

DIA WASHDC

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 487

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT

SUBJ: COMMANDER OF COPCON URGES CONTINUING ROLE FOR AFM

REF: LISBON A-10, JANUARY 28, 1975

SUMMARY: BRIGADIER CARVALHO HAS MADE STATEMENT TO PRESS INDICATING THAT ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT SHOULD SEEK PARTICIPATION IN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AS POLITICAL PARTIES ARE NOT NOW REPRESENTING TRUE INTERESTS OF PORTUGUESE PEOPLE. END SUMMARY.

1. TWO DAY MEETING OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM) COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CC) AT SESIMBRA JANUARY 25-26 WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY AIR FORCE CHIEF MENDES DIAS, JUNTA MEMBER GEN. ANIBAL FREIRE, ARMY CHIEF CARLOS FABIAO, MINISTERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO VITOR ALVES AND MELO ANTUNES, AND COPCON OPERATIONAL COMMANDER BRIG. OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO.

2. FOLLOWING CONCLUSION OF MEETING OTELO CARVALHO, SPEAKING ON OWN AUTHORITY, TOLD PRESS THAT GROUP HAD ANALYZED WHETHER TO LEAVE PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS TO POLITICAL PARTIES OR TO INTERVENE "IN DEFENSE OF THE TRUE INTERESTS OF THE
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PEOPLE." CARVALHO ADDED THAT POLITICAL PARTIES ARE ENGAGED

IN DEMAGOGIC PARTISAN DISPUTES.

3. ALTHOUGH CARVALHO INDICATED COORDINATING COMMITTEE MADE NO DECISION REGARDING FUTURE OF AFM, HE STATED HIS BELIEF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT WOULD SEEK MANNER OF PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DUE TO "PROFOUND LACK OF POLITIZATION" OF PORTUGUESE PEOPLE. CARVALHO SAID THIS VIEW SHARED BY "MAJORITY OF COLLEAGUES."

4. ASKED WHETHER AFM PARTICIPATION WOULD IMPLY THAT NEW CONSTITUTION WOULD REFLECT PROGRESSIVE THINKING OF APRIL 25, CARVALHO REPLIED THAT PARTY RECEIVING MOST VOTES WOULD NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT TRUE WILL OR BEST INTERESTS OF PORTUGUESE PEOPLE. HE STATED AFM SHOULD NOT BECOME POLITICAL PARTY SEEKING VOTES BUT THAT IT HAS RESPONSIBILITY TO DEFEND REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT OF APRIL 25. CARVALHO EMPHASIZED IT INDISPENSABLE THAT AFM PROTECT PEOPLES' INTERESTS WHICH AT THIS MOMENT TRANSCEND ELECTORAL OBJECTIVES BEING PURSUED BY POLITICAL PARTIES.

5. COMMENT: CARVALHO IS PRONE TO SPEAK FREELY AND HE DOES NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT CC OR AFM. HOWEVER, HIS DECLARATIONS FOLLOWING COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING ARE DISTURBIGLY CLOSE TO LINE BEING PURSUED BY COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP) AND ITS ALLIES. WE HAVE NO CONVINCING EVIDENCE SHOWING AN IDEOLOGICAL PRE-DILECTION ON PART OF CARVALHO -- EITHER TO LEFT OR TO RIGHT. HOWEVER, HE WOULD BE A PRIME TARGET FOR AFM LEFTISTS TO ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE BECAUSE OF HIS ROLE IN OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF MILITARY FORCE IN PORTUGAL.
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